

THE Baptist Record

BRIEFS

SOUTHERN SEMINARY'S MOHLER GETS ETS POST

DENVER (BP and local reports) — R. Albert Mohler Jr., in his 25th year as president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., was elected without objection to serve as vice president of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) at the 69-year-old group's Nov. 13-15 annual meeting in Denver. "The history of ETS is the history of the development of the evangelical movement in America," Mohler said. "Even though it is off the screen of most people in evangelical churches because of its academic nature, it was one of the most important lodestars of the evangelical movement."

DILBECK INSTALLED AS BGCO DIRECTOR

EDMOND, Ok. (BP) — Hence Dilbeck was installed as the ninth executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma during the convention's annual meeting Nov. 12-13 at First Church, Edmond. The former pastor of Quail Springs Church, Oklahoma City, told those assembled, "We will dream about the future and imagine our most essential tasks and most productive strategies. We will order our priorities... We will ask because we confess that unless the Lord builds the house they labor in vain who build it. We will ask because we believe our Father knows how to give good gifts to those who ask."

PAIR SET TO SERVE AS KBC INTERIM LEADERS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Curtis Woods and Jim Donnell, two top associate executives at the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) in Louisville, will serve together as interim leaders of the convention while a search committee works to find the next executive director-treasurer to succeed Paul Chitwood, who was selected Nov. 15 as the new president of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va. Woods is associate executive director for convention relations, while Donnell is associate executive director for convention operations.



GRIM DUTY — First responders sift through what's left of a burned-down home in Paradise, Calif., looking for human remains. The Camp Fire nearly leveled the city of 27,000 residents, and many people remain unaccounted for. (BP screen capture courtesy of CNN)

Baptists suffer Calif. wildfires

Pastors search for church members as infernos continue

PARADISE, Calif. (BP and local reports) — Members of Paradise Ridge Church in Paradise, Calif., have asked their pastor, Bob Sorensen, if they will continue to have a church, but not because their building is gone. They ask because the Camp Fire destroyed much of their community.

"We've had disasters before," Sorensen said, "and we thought we would be able to just go back



SORENSEN

[this time], but you can't go back." While the church still stands — "an amazing thing," he said — Sorensen's home was destroyed by the fire and he worries about church members from whom he hasn't heard.

"I still have people from the church who are missing that I can't find," he said. "I spend hours a day trying to find them."

The Camp Fire began Nov. 8 and quickly leveled Magalia, home to about 12,000 residents 90 miles north of Sacramento, and adjacent to

see WILDFIRES on p. 9

ERLC asks for repeal of church taxation law

WASHINGTON (BP) — A diverse coalition led by the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville is urging members of the U.S. Congress to repeal a section of a federal law that could force churches to file tax returns for the first time in American history.

The ERLC and 32 other concerned organizations sent a letter Nov. 13 to U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Or.), the committee's ranking member, as well as to U.S. Representatives Kevin Brady (R-Texas), chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, and Richard Neal (D-Mass.), the committee's ranking member, asking them to rescind before 2019 a provision in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which took effect Jan. 1 of this year.

Without repeal, the cost to the charitable sector would be a congressionally estimated \$1.7 billion over 10 years, the religious groups and nonprofit organizations said in the letter.

see TAXATION on p. 9

SBC annual meeting theme announced

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention President J. D. Greear says the supremacy of the Gospel will motivate him as he leads Baptists to evangelize, plant churches, and mobilize college students for the Kingdom, as reflected in the theme he has chosen for the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 11-12 in Birmingham, Ala.

Greear has chosen "Gospel Above All" from 1 Cor. 15:3-4 for the theme, promising that he will reflect on the Gospel "again and again" during his term.

"It is the Gospel that is the source of our renewal, and it is the Gospel that should be our defining characteristic as a people," Greear said in his first presidential address to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive

GOSPEL

2019 SBC ANNUAL MEETING
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA JUNE 11-12

ABOVE ALL



GREEAR

Committee at its fall meeting in Nashville. "[The Gospel] should be what people think about and talk about when they think and talk about us."

Empowering cultural diversity, engaging the next generation in cooperative missions, encouraging churches to "take the next step" in church planting, and preventing sexual abuse are also

among his goals, said Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

As part of his focus on the Gospel, Greear will also launch the "Who's Your One?" personal evangelism initiative in January 2019, he said. He will challenge churches to use their own style and personality in encouraging each church member intentionally to share the Gospel and build relationship with one person over the course of a year.

#SBNFMY CAR-RT LOT#C019
0000 2911 1226# S857 P1
005 DTM
SOUTHERN BAPT HISTORICAL SOC
901 COMMERCE ST STE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203-3620



From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Self-exempt?

This time of year our television sets pour out a near-endless stream of promotions for new motion pictures being released in time for out-of-school young people on Christmas break. Like past Christmas break movie seasons, there will be a few movies worth watching this year and a whole lot of movies not worth the cellulose acetate used to produce them. Same for television, especially since the advent of those hundreds of cable channels.

We should send the American entertainment complex a pointed message from Christians. Why? Since at least the days of Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, Hollywood has been viewed as a vast cesspool of licentious entitlement. Sex scandals have rocked the modern entertainment establishment virtually from its founding, and there has been an almost constant complaint about the objectionable content of many of its products.

From the glorification of drug use to pornographic violence and the vivid, perverse representations of human sexuality, the residents of Hollywood — not the California city but the members of the entertainment industry centered there — have engaged in a nihilist separation from the rest of America in which anything goes and absolutely nothing is out of bounds.

A good example of that is the manner in which many of Hollywood's elites reacted to Roman Polanski, the famed motion picture director and, unfortunately, fugitive child rapist.

Polanski, who directed such Oscar-nominated movies as *Rosemary's Baby*, *Chinatown*, and *The Pianist* (for which he won an Academy Award), pled guilty in a California court to the sexual violation of a 13-year-old girl.

A reading of the child's grand jury testimony is not for the faint-hearted. The girl describes how Polanski lured her to the palatial California estate of movie star Jack Nicholson for a putative modeling session, then plied her with alcohol and drugs before undressing her.

What followed, as the young girl cried in fear and pleaded with Polanski to be allowed to go home, is humanly incomprehensible.

Born in France to Polish parents, Polanski fled to the country of his birth before he could be sentenced for his criminal act in the U.S. The

French government refused to extradite him.

After jetsetting across the globe for over thirty years as the darling of the motion picture elite, he was finally arrested on an international warrant when he landed in Switzerland to attend a film festival. As if to once again drive home the point about the industry's twisted thinking, he was to have received the film festival's highest award for lifetime achievement despite his status as a convicted child molester.

Hollywood's elites swung into high dudgeon. Actress Debra Winger demanded Polanski's immediate release from Swiss detention. "We hope today this latest order will be dropped. It is based on a three-decade-old case that is all but dead but for minor technicalities," she said. "We stand by and wait for his release and his next masterwork."

Some of Hollywood's top names signed a petition pressing for Polanski's release. Producer Harvey Weinstein (yes, that Harvey Weinstein) said he was "calling on every film-maker we can to help fix this terrible situation."

Likely the most pathetic petition signer of all — even more so than Weinstein — was Woody Allen. The famously neurotic director came under heavy criticism some years back for having sex with and eventually marrying the young, adopted daughter of his then-lover, Mia Farrow.

Outspoken feminist Whoopi Goldberg even took Polanski's side over the helpless 13-year-old girl. "I know it wasn't rape-rape," Goldberg said on her television show, *The View*. "It was something else but I don't believe it was 'rape-rape.'"

In the real world out here in flyover country, child rape is child rape — but not inside the Hollywood bubble. The argument seems to be that acquiring the status of a famous Hollywood "artist" self-exempts oneself from all legal and moral limitations.

Too many Americans — and regrettably, too many American Christians — put these people on a pedestal just because they can direct or produce or act in entertainment products that often aren't all that entertaining.

They take us for intellectual dullards, and we are. After all, we still hand over our money to them by the billions.

Codfish and Catfish

I often ask God, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" It seems as though some of us are constantly doing battle with life itself and at every turn there is a new challenge. Yet there are others who seem to live in the lap of luxury without a care in the world.

We're prone to ask, "God, why can't life be as easy as it seems for some people? I would really like a lot more blessings and a lot less blisters."

I don't have an answer to all of the difficulties and problems in life, but I do believe I have some insight into at least some of mine.

My family and I stayed at Michigan Baptists' Bambi Lake Conference and Retreat Center near Roscommon for a few days, giving us the opportunity to fish in its beautiful lake. We caught several kinds of fish but to my surprise, no catfish. That is what jogged my memory about catfish and the insight into problems they can provide.

Most of us who were reared in the South love catfish (they are very tasty), but after reading this you might find a completely new appreciation for them.

Several years ago, I came across some fascinating information about catfish that illustrates the "why" of many of the difficulties we experience in life. In the northeastern United States, codfish are a big commercial business. There is a market for eastern cod all over the United States, especially in sections farthest removed from the northeast coastline.

The demand for codfish posed a problem to the shippers. At first they froze the cod and then shipped them elsewhere, but the freeze took away much of the flavor. So they experimented with shipping them alive in tanks of seawater, but that proved even worse. Not only was it more expensive to ship in this manner, the cod still lost their flavor and in addition became soft and mushy en route.

Finally, some creative person solved the problem in a most innovative manner. The codfish were placed in the tank of water along with their natural enemy — the catfish.

From the time the cod left the East Coast until they arrived at their west-



Guest opinion
with Tim Patterson

ernmost destination, those ornery catfish chased the cod all over the tank. The most amazing thing happened. When the cod arrived at the market, they were as fresh as the day they were first caught. There was no loss of flavor nor was the texture affected.

If anything, it was better than before. Each of us is in a tank of our own particular and inescapable circumstances. Yes, it is painful and sometimes almost unbearable to be in this tank we call life. I don't know about you but from my perspective, my tank is full.

I have come to realize that God doesn't see it that way. Because He loves us and wants us to be the best we can be, He has made sure that there are enough God-appointed "catfish" in our tanks to bring sufficient tension to keeps us alive, alert, fresh, and growing. It's all part of God's project to shape our character so we will be more like Him.

At times you may think you will be eaten alive by the predators in your tank but just remember, God is using those creatures in your midst to accomplish His will in your life. Be "tank-full" to have them there.

As Romans 8:28 tells us, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Patterson is executive director/treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan in Fenton. This article first appeared in the convention's online Baptist Beacon (www.baptistbeacon.net), and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.

THE Baptist Record

Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
mryoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Dana Richardson
drichardson@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
DeAnna Burgess
dburgess@mbcb.org

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Whit Lewis, New Albany
Derrick Wilson, Kosciusko
Carolyn Reeves, Oxford
Garland Boyd, Brookhaven
Lucy Stringer, Foxworth
Don Hicks, Bay Springs

Postmaster:
Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

BAPTISTS

VOLUME 142 • NUMBER 46 • ISSN 0005-5778
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$11.99 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

Chitwood describes preparation for IMB top job

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — During the International Mission Board (IMB) presidential search process, Paul Chitwood knew departing from his role as executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention would be difficult — but he couldn't get away from Jesus' words in Mark 10:29 about leaving "house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the sake of the Gospel."

Chitwood said that passage came to his mind so much that "I would not open my Bible [to it] because I didn't want to see that again," Chitwood said Nov. 15 following his election as IMB president at the board's International Learning Center near Richmond, Va. He knew he had to submit to God's will, however.

Chitwood said the ways God prepared him and called him to the IMB led naturally to his vision for the board's future. One confirmation of God's direction, Chitwood said, came the night before his nomination was announced Nov. 6.

Despite God's leading to continue talking with the IMB's presidential search committee, it still wasn't clear a move to Richmond would be possible. Chitwood and his wife Michelle are in the process of adopting their six-year-old foster daughter, and officials with the state of Kentucky had said she would not be allowed to move to Virginia as long as she remained a ward of the state.

As Chitwood sat in his car preparing for a speaking engagement in Bowling Green, Ky., on Nov. 5, his phone rang. His attorney said the adoption would be finalized Dec. 6 and the Chitwoods would be free to move.

"It was just a powerful way the Lord confirmed to us all the details were taken care of," he said.

At the same time God was working in Chitwood's heart,



Paul Chitwood

He also appeared to be working on the IMB presidential search committee, chairman and former Mississippi pastor Chuck Pourciau said.

"The search was not a straight line. It went down a lot of roads and had to stop and back up," said Pourciau, currently pastor of Broadmoor Church in Shreveport, La. He added that multiple "fantastic candidates" were involved in the process.

Eventually, the 15-member search committee began fasting and praying each Tuesday. One Tuesday, as Pourciau recalled it, "God moved on our hearts as a committee and by the end of that Wednesday, we came together as one and said, 'We need to pursue Paul.'"

Pourciau said Chitwood was among multiple candidates who already had interviewed with the committee but following a second interview in Sep-

tember, Chitwood became the only candidate with the support of the entire committee and that's how we ended up where we did."

Final confirmation of God's direction was the full trustee board's vote to elect him," Chitwood said.

Long before the election, however, God was preparing him for the IMB presidency. Chitwood described an element of that preparation that came 10 years ago when he served as IMB trustee chairman and had to report that, in light of economic challenges, "we see no other option but to begin to reduce our missionary headcount."

That reality was especially painful, he said, because the IMB had approximately 5,700 career missionaries on the field at the time with a goal of achieving 8,000 and about 2,000 mis-

sionary candidates preparing to be sent.

Chitwood said ever since that announcement, he has felt a passion to help increase the number of Southern Baptist missionaries. "My heart was broken, and it's never healed."

As of October 2018, there were 3,667 career IMB missionaries, according to data from sbc.net.

Another element of Chitwood's preparation to lead the IMB, he said, was his experience as a pastor for 18 years and KBC executive director for seven years. Four pastorates in Kentucky helped him develop a focus on the local church, Chitwood said, while leading Kentucky Baptists taught him about human resources and legal issues faced by Baptist denominational organizations.

His state executive experience also taught him to be a Co-

operative Program "fundraiser-in-chief," he added.

Chitwood said he will draw on all those experiences to maintain healthy relationships with small and large churches as IMB president. "The local church is not a temporary tool. The local church is the bride and the body of Christ."

His experience communicating with churches will help Chitwood continue to broaden the IMB's media strategy through production of videos, written news stories, and releases on other media platforms, he said.

There are "millions upon millions of Southern Baptists" who currently are not receiving information about the SBC through Baptist media channels like Baptist Press and state Baptist papers, Chitwood said. The IMB must "find ways through the media to gain more access to our people" to inspire them to support Southern Baptist missionaries.

The importance of including women in missionary and appropriate leadership roles is another principle Chitwood said he has learned through his years of ministry. At the IMB, he will draw from the many "very gifted ladies" in Southern Baptist life for IMB service, Chitwood said.

He also pledged to enforce a zero-tolerance policy "when it comes to any inappropriate conduct," including abuse and harassment.

While "Scripture gives us guidance and direction [and] parameters when it comes to spiritual leadership," he said, "there are so many roles at the IMB, and in the local church for that matter, where a biblical complementarian view places no limits whatsoever on ladies."

Based on the sum of his experiences in ministry, Chitwood said he has told God, "Lord, in Your kindness, I'm really not up for this job but You've given me a lot to bring, at least."

UC-Berkeley senator ostracized over transgender stance

BERKELEY, Calif. (BP) — A Christian student leader is facing backlash and censure after abstaining from a pro-transgender vote and citing a biblical standard of two genders in her defense.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle in the newspaper's Nov. 9 issue, a University of California at Berkeley LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) group is petitioning for Sen. Isabella Chow's resignation from student government. Her campus political party, Student Action, has dropped ties to her. The university newspaper has refused to run Chow's editorial in her

defense. Hundreds have protested against her.

The Berkeley Political Review announced Nov. 4 that the quarterly magazine dropped Chow from its editorial board on Nov. 14.

The 20-year-old business and music major of Cambodian and Malaysian descent was homeschooled on a family ranch in Gilroy, Ca., she reports on her website.

In abstaining from the vote, Chow read a statement condemning discrimination against the LGBT community and other minorities, affirmed the LGBT community's God-given value, and expressed Je-

sus' "deepest love" for LGBT individuals, according to the Oct. 31 statement she posted on her office website.

"Where this bill crosses the line for me is that I am asked to promote a choice of identities that I do not agree to be right or best for an individual," Chow said, "and to promote certain organizations that uphold values contrary to those of my [Christian] community."

"As a Christian, I personally do believe that certain acts and lifestyles conflict with what is good, right and true," Chow said. "I believe that God created male and female at the beginning of time, and designed

sex for marriage between one man and one woman."

"For me, to love another person does not mean that I silently concur when, at the bottom of my heart, I do not believe that your choices are right or the best for you as an individual."

Chow senses a backlash in her daily campus activities, she told The Chronicle.

"I go to classes, and people are looking at me. I've been painted in such a negative light. Everybody's talking about it. No matter how much I tried to say, 'I can love you and still disagree with you, people still interpret my disagreement with being a bigot and a hater.'"



Isabella Chow

Thanksgiving season may have just passed, but it would still do all of us good to just stop and fill in the blanks of all the things for which we are truly grateful to God. I know there are those dry, drab, dreary times in life when you can hardly come up with a good thought about giving thanks. On the other hand, there are those moments when it seems your mind is filled with thoughts of gratitude and appreciation, of praise and thanksgiving to God. Your heart seems to be overflowing with feelings that are wonderful about your blessings from heaven, so much so that you can hardly come up with words to describe them.

I think the psalmist was in that second mode when he wrote Psalm 103:1-2 — "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Then the psalmist goes off in every direction, pointing out the blessings that God had brought in his life. God forgives us. God heals us. God redeems us. God crowns us with lovingkindness and tender mercies. God satisfies us. The psalmist was overwhelmed with all of the good things God had poured out in his life.

Thanksgiving is a great time not only to stop and give thanks, but to fill in the blanks too. To actually jot down the wonder of the things God has brought about in your life. That He has just filled you to overflowing. Maybe, even today, you could find a quiet moment and just fill in some of your own blanks and think about the things and the people God has brought into your life (and about the things you're grateful are not a part of your life) and just praise God for His goodness.

If I were to fill in some of the blanks of my life, I would begin by thanking God for heritage. I am so blessed by my heritage — my grandparents. I knew all four of my grandparents. My sweet grandmothers. We didn't live next to them or down the road from them but many miles from them, but it always seemed as though they were a part of our lives. My grandfathers — I have memories of both of them. Sweet and gentle memories, good memories. Not mean, bitter memories, but thank-



Fill in the Blanks

ful for the heritage that was passed along to me by my grandparents.

I think about the heritage of my own mom and dad. Growing up in a family with my preacher dad and my preacher's wife mom, I would learn only later how difficult it is to serve a church and at the same time care for a family, especially a family of five boys. I guess I was grown, married, and been out on my own for a while before I realized how much we did not have. In fact, I look back and realize that sometimes we didn't have enough of anything except love. A love that brought care and security to a bunch of boys who were growing up and eating their parents' out of house and home.

My parents never complained. They never fussed and griped about having to take care of us. It was a positive, hope-filled, "God cares for us and we care for each other" kind of home and today that seems to be more and more a rarity. One of our ladies here at the Baptist Building was telling me about her home when she was growing up. They didn't have a lot of the things that maybe other folks had and were maybe, by some estimations, poor. Maybe that's all of us, but she remembered an experience of being at the store with her dad and there in the meat case she saw some meat that she had never seen before. It was steaks, packaged up. She asked her dad, "What is that?" Her dad's response was

something like, "Well, that's the kind of meat that people have to eat when they can't afford to have it ground up." What a beautiful twist, a positive twist, a blessing twist on life. I must say that is the spirit of the heritage in which I grew up.

Another grateful blank that I'd fill in would be for my health. There is no dollar amount that can be put on the values of health, to feel good, to be able to get up and go and do and serve and enjoy life free from pain or restrictions that keep you from enjoying the moments of life. There are times when I almost feel guilty for being so healthy. I can only pause to say, "Thank You, God, for I am undeserving." Sure, I have had the experience of broken things in life. The blocked and bruised things of life but at the same time, those things have been only momentary and would heal up and the pains would go away and the ability to get up and enjoy life would once again be there before me.

Another blessing blank I would fill in is home. My own home. Not just the house, but the home. Soon, Shirley and I will celebrate our 54th wedding anniversary and oh, when we look back over all those years, what a blessing God has provided us in our home. Three children who have blessed us. Their companions who have joined in blessing us. Eight grandchildren that have come to be a part of the home

that God has given us. I could not leave out filling in the big blank of life that would be our home. I see so many homes that are in chaos, disharmony, hurts, bitterness, distress. The whole concept of home seems to be under attack and in disarray and so, grateful from the bottom of my heart, I say, "Thank You, Lord, for allowing me to fill in a blessing blank with the joys that You have brought in our home."

The next-to-last blank of thankfulness I would fill in would be heaven, the hereafter. I have so many friends and family in heaven and I look forward to seeing them again. Over the years as a pastor, I have been called on at times to be a part of funerals. A closing of this earthly life and the celebration of the opening of a new, eternal life. Great friends and followers of Jesus who I look forward to being with again. Most recently, my brothers and I and our families celebrated the home going of the first of our circle of five Futral boys to go on to be with the Lord. To say the least, it was a bittersweet occasion but in truth, while we recognize this life on earth is not forever, it is forever in the land of feasts and provisions that only God could give us in His new heaven. It was there that we focused on our brother being with the Lord.

It was a somewhat sobering moment for me and I think for all of us, because we had never lost anyone in that family circle, but now we have. It brings into focus how we need to celebrate life here together and because of the provisions of Christ, we can celebrate the provisions of life beyond here. I fill in the blank for so many of the people I have known in this journey who have already passed through the gates where we will one day be gloriously reunited again.

Finally, this Thanksgiving I fill in the blanks and this last one — eternal one — is the hereafter. God's wonderful heaven. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Ps. 103:1).

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News



MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE School of Business has been awarded a chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma business honor society. Joining School of Business dean Eduardo Marcelo (center) at the Nov. 7 announcement were professors Stephen Trouard (left) and Bobby Perkins. Only the top ten percent of business students are eligible for induction.



MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE archers captured two titles Oct. 28 at the National 3D Collegiate Championships at Graham Creek Interpretive Center in Foley, Al. The men's compound team won first place, as did the bow hunter women's squad. USA Archery and the Archery Shooters Association sanctioned the national competition.

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY (WCU) Baptist Student Union (BSU) volunteers worked in Panama City, Fl., on Hurricane Michael clean-up Nov. 6-9 during their trimester break. Among those who offered a helping hand were (back row, from left) Mack McElveen, Greg Williams, Carli Gustafson, Rachel Moore, WCU supporter Sara Canova, (front row, from left) Cora Jenkins, Lizzie Stewart, and BSU director Tim Glaze.



November 22, 2018 THE BAPTIST RECORD

Federal mandate dies quiet death in final regs

WASHINGTON (BP) — The seven-year battle by objectors to the federal abortion/contraception mandate has come to a regulatory close with what is considered a victory for freedom of conscience.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump issued two final rules Nov. 7 that supply conscience protections to Americans with a religious or moral objection to the 2011 mandate instituted under former U.S. President Obama.

The controversial regulation, which helped implement the 2010 health care reform law, required employers to provide their workers with coverage for contraceptives,

including those with mechanisms that can potentially induce abortions, or face potentially devastating fines.

The edict elicited legal challenges from more than 90 religious nonprofits, including GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and at least seven Baptist universities.

One of the new regulations issued Nov. 7 which finalized "interim final" rules issued in October 2017 exempts entities and individuals from the requirement based on their religious beliefs, while the other rule protects individuals, non-profit organizations, and small

businesses on the basis of a moral conviction apart from a specific religious belief.

The final rules came more than two years after the U.S. Supreme Court nullified multiple federal appeals court decisions against GuideStone and other religious institutions and more than four years following the justices' decision in favor of Hobby Lobby's conscience-based challenge to the mandate.

Southern Baptist advocates for conscience protections applauded the final rules. "These exemptions are the long-awaited conclusion to the crucial achievement of preserving religious liberty from an unlawful government overreach," said Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville.

GuideStone welcomes "the new rules and appreciates this administration's desire to protect religious organizations from having to choose between their deeply held convictions or crippling penalties," said Timothy Head, the SBC entity's executive officer for denominational and public relations services, in a written statement for BP.

GuideStone and two of the ministries it represents already had gained a final, favorable verdict in court. In July, a federal judge in Oklahoma issued a judgment in favor of GuideStone and its plaintiffs: Truett McConnell University, a Georgia Baptist institution,

and Reaching Souls International, an Oklahoma mission-sending entity.

However, cases out of California and Pennsylvania involving the Little Sisters of the Poor are still under appeal. The Little Sisters of the Poor is a Roman Catholic order that serves the poverty-stricken elderly and became the face of the institutions objecting to the mandate.

Mark Rienzi, president of Becket Fund for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C., a nonprofit religious freedom law firm representing the Little Sisters of the Poor, said in a written release, "This long unnecessary culture war is now almost over — all that is left is for state governments to admit that there are many ways to deliver these [abortion and contraceptive] services without nuns, and the Little Sisters can return to serving the elderly poor in peace."

On the same day as the release of the final mandate regulations, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a proposed rule also affecting abortion coverage. The rule requires health plan issuers in the exchanges created by the 2010 Affordable Care Act to separately collect funds for elective abortion and thereby prevent taxpayers from subsidizing plans that cover abortion, according to the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC).

The proposed rule "sends a strong message that the fed-

eral government ought to get out of the business of paying for abortion until Obamacare can be replaced," said Jennifer Popik, NRLC's legislative director, in a written release.

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), the country's No. 1 abortion provider, decried all the rules.

Dawn Laguens, PPFA's executive vice president, said the regulations "are dangerous," and not what the vast majority of the American people want. Women will remember this attack on their basic health care."

In May 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated multiple federal appeals court decisions against the religious institutions and blocked the Obama administration from imposing fines on them. The justices told the appeals courts involved to give the parties an opportunity to reach a solution "that accommodates petitioners' religious exercise while at the same time ensuring that women covered by petitioners' health plans receive full and equal health coverage, including contraceptive coverage."

No agreement was reached before Obama left office in January 2017.

The federally approved contraceptives for which coverage is required by the mandate include the intrauterine device (IUD) and such drugs as Plan B, the "morning-after" pill. Both the IUD and "morning-after" pill possess post-fertilization mechanisms that potentially can cause abortions by preventing implantation of tiny embryos.

The rule also covers "ella," which in a fashion similar to the abortion drug RU 486 can act even after implantation to end the life of the child.

The ERLC and two other SBC entities — the International Mission Board and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as well as Southern's president, R. Albert Mohler Jr. — filed a friend-of-the-court brief in 2016 that urged the U.S. Supreme Court to rule that the HHS accommodation violates religious freedom.

In 2014, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Hobby Lobby's challenge to the abortion/contraception mandate. In its 5-4 opinion in that case, the justices upheld objections to the requirement by "closely held" for-profit companies such as family owned businesses.

Messengers to the 2012 SBC meeting adopted a resolution calling for an exemption from the mandate for "all religious organizations and people of faith ... who declare a religious objection to such coverage."

CLASSIFIEDS

HAMBURG FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please send resume to First Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, 203 E. Parker St., Hamburg, AR 71646 or email to fbchbg.office@gmail.com. For more information you may call the church office at 870-853-5520.

STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC. SERVING MS & AL since 1992. Call 800-805-2970.

GET THE BEST RATES ON: Health Insurance and Medicare Supplements. Call 1-800-541-8196 or visit www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com.

CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY. FREE ESTIMATES: Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone 601-776-8617.

WINDOW AND SCREEN SHOP — windows and storm windows built to fit your opening. Plus new window screens and rescreen old screens. Call Tom Cook 601-709-4879.

WWW.SEBRENHOMEIMPROVEMENT.COM. Christian owned Don & Rita Sebrén. 601-992-2092. All home improvements, siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

HOPPER STAINED GLASS: Custom windows, restoration and repairs, safety and insulated glass, custom aluminum and wood frames. Statewide 601-502-0202, www.hopperglass.net.

PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE: Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.). 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg. Deacon of Hardy Street Baptist Church. Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact him at 601-408-4608 or bennyhornaby.com

MS POSITIONS

PARKWAY BAPTIST CHURCH, HOUSTON, MS, IS SEEKING A FULL TIME OR PART TIME WORSHIP LEADER. Please email resume to the search committee at randyrinehart63@gmail.com.

HILLCREST BAPTIST CHURCH, BYRAM, PART-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER. Please send resume's to jsdholden@bellsouth.net

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH LONG BEACH IS RECEIVING RESUMES FOR A FULL TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Send resumes to fbcbsearchcommittee@gmail.com or First Baptist Church Long Beach Attn. Music Search Committee 300 North Cleveland Avenue Long Beach, MS 39560.

MEADOWVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH/STARKVILLE MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH. Basic requirements include a minimum of an associate's degree and two years related ministerial experience/training. Resumes may be submitted to info@mbcstark.com or mailed to 300 Linden Circle, Starkville, MS 39759. For information call 662-769-4188 or visit <http://mbcstark.com/>

MINISTER OF MUSIC NEEDED@NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, MONTICELLO, MS BI-VOCATIONAL/PART TIME JOB. Sundays Only. If interested contact Office @601-567-2862 or send resume to 618 Carmel New Hope Rd, Monticello, MS 39654 or email: nhbcb@wb4me.com. College students welcome to apply. References required.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH OF MERIDIAN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC. Our Worship Services are a Blend of contemporary and traditional music. Interested parties should send a resume to cbcfinfo@comcast.net For More Information Call: Sharon Seal @ 601-483-5432.

NEW PROSPECT BAPTIST CHURCH, OLIVE BRANCH, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR. Please email resume to rcurtis@newprospect.net.

EAST END BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBUS, MS IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR NURSERY WORKERS on Sundays & Wednesdays to care for babies & children through 5-yrs. old. Must be at least 18 years old, child care experience preferred. A background check will be performed. Email resume to office@eastendbc.org.

SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR - BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH. Located at Meridian, MS in the Whynot community of Southern Lauderdale County. Please email resume to office@whynotbethany.org or mail to Bethany Baptist Church, 4475 Ponds Road, Meridian, MS 39301.

FULL TIME WORSHIP LEADER EXPERIENCED IN CHORAL CONDUCTING FOR SLAYDEN BAPTIST CHURCH. Send resume to Search Committee-jstrahan@slaydenbaptist.com or mail to Search Committee, Slayden Baptist Church, 2534 Hwy 72, Lamar, MS. 38642

MSAudio LLC

Design & Integration of Professional Audio, Video, & Lighting
Church, Conference Room, School
Equipment sales, service and installation

Trooper Hales

info@msaudiollc.com

P.O. Box 1575

Clinton, MS 39060

Ph 601-923-9947

Fax 601-924-2880



The Isaacs
Christmas Concert
December 16, 2018
North Greenwood Baptist Church

Doors open
@ 5 p.m.

Concert
@ 6 p.m.

\$20 General
Admission

Tickets available at

North Greenwood
Baptist Church

615 Grand Boulevard
662-453-2801

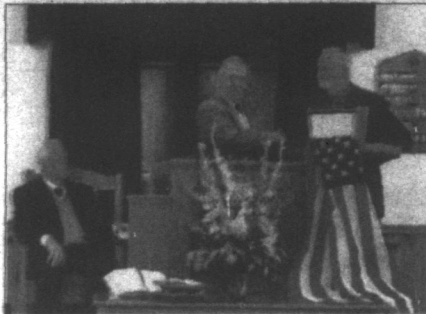
Just for the Record



FERNWOOD CHURCH, PIKE COUNTY ASSOCIATION, honored its veterans Nov. 11. Drew Holifield, pastor.



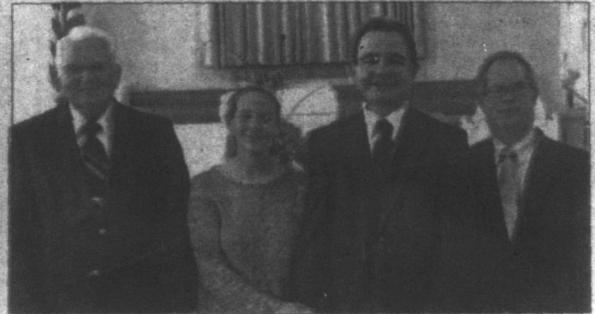
Women, men, and kids of **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, packed 102 boxes for needy children for Christmas.



LITTLE BAHALA CHURCH, WESSON, received their 200 year acknowledgement presented by Steve Jackson. Shown are pastor Bendon Ginn, Jackson, and Alfred Smith.



CENTER CHURCH, ATTALA COUNTY, recognized pastor Jeffery Hutchison for 14 years of service. Shown are Hutchison, his wife Ashley, and children Hunter and Haleigh.



MCADAMS CHURCH, ATTALA ASSOCIATION, recently ordained Wayne Downs as deacon. Shown are pastor James Young, Sally and Wayne Downs, and Steve Jordan.



NEW LIBERTY, MORTON, held its annual Veteran's Day service Nov. 11. Shown are the veterans.

In other Church News:

► **Meadow Grove Church, Brandon**, is hosting Jonathan Wilburn and The LeFevre Quartet Nov. 29, 6:30 p.m.. Love offering.



Women on Missions, **CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT**, prepared 29 boxes containing soup, corn bread, and banana-nut bread for delivery in the community. Pictured are Gayle Tullos, Debbie Willoughby, Susie Fortenberry, Letha Greer, leader Bobbie Dynaway, and Rhonda Holmes. Mike Burns, pastor.



ATTALA ASSOCIATION, recently welcomed a new church into the association: **SHILOH CHURCH, KOSCIUSKO**. Shown are moderator Ralph Hunt and Shiloh pastor Matt Steed.



A baby dedication service was held recently at **LAKE WASHINGTON FIRST CHURCH, GLEN ALLAN**. Shown are pastor Jimmy McLendon, Helmar Bruwer, Leja Mae Bruwer, and Sarah McDaniel Bruwer.



WILLIAMSVILLE CHURCH, WILLIAMSVILLE, recently held a deacon ordination service for Chad Chipley and Scott Coleman. Pictured are from left, pastor Jeremy Tillman, Jennifer Tillman, Chipley, Marie Chipley, Charlene Coleman, and Coleman.

New workers claim mission fields around world

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists celebrated the appointment of 42 new missionaries in a service held Nov. 14, near Richmond, Va. Churches of all sizes from Louisiana to Indiana and North Carolina to Kansas are sending singles, couples, and families to large cities, small villages, and hard-to-reach places around the world.

Vance Pitman, senior pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, reminded new missionaries and those attending of the importance of cooperative giving and cooperative going. "This is our denomination at its absolute best. This is the tip of the spear. We can do more together than we can do by ourselves."

Preaching from Acts 1-2, Pitman described four characteristics that enabled the early church to change the world:

- Faith that produced obedience.

- Passion that produced unity.

- Desperation that produced prayer.

- The Spirit that produced power.

At Pentecost, a small group of people launched a church in Jerusalem that saw 3,000 people saved on its opening day, Pitman said. "That is a successful church start! At their second gathering, 5,000 men came to Christ, not counting the women and children.

"Within six months, the church had grown to over 100,000 believers in Jerusalem... Within a few years, the Gospel had spread throughout their region of the world and in less than 40 years the message of Jesus had reached every corner of the known world."

The 42 newly-appointed missionaries will serve in countries around the world. Many of them cannot be identified publicly for their own safety.

Pitman reminded them that the first Christians were also called to start a church in Jerusalem — "a place where Jesus was whipped, beaten, tried, crucified, and buried; a place that hated them and their God."

Each of the new missionaries shared testimonies of how God led them to the point of giving up the comforts of their everyday lives to take the Gospel around the world.

They are coming from a variety of backgrounds. Chris and Anna Garduce, sent to serve in Madagascar by The Church at West Vista in West Columbia, S.C., shared how God "rescued" each of them and gave them each a zealotness to share the grace they received with those who have not yet heard the good news.

"So many people need to be rescued from darkness and brought into His marvelous



NEW LEADER, NEW MISSIONARIES — Paul Chitwood (second from right), newly-elected president of the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va., and his wife Michelle (right) talk with Jonathan (left) and Rebecca McNeil after the Nov. 14 appointment service. The McNeils, being sent by Pleasant View Church, Waynesburg, Ky., are two of 42 missionaries appointed by IMB trustees. The McNeils will serve in Poland. (IMB photo)

light as I was," Chris told the standing-room only crowd. From the moment she met Christ, "there has been a roaring fire inside my heart to see the nations worship and love King Jesus," Anna said.

Nathan and Kim Gunter grew up in small churches where they saw the cooperative giving of Southern Baptists send men and women around the world with the Gospel. After college, Nathan also served a two-year appointment with IMB among a desert people group in West Africa.

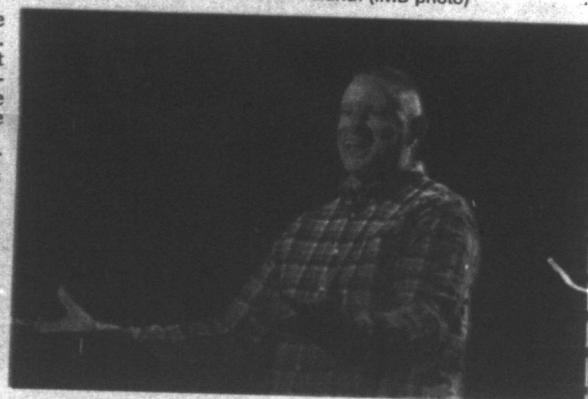
Short-term trips gave the couple a "growing passion" for God's work in Africa. "Now after years of pastoring an amazing church family here in the U.S., the Lord has made it clear that He is calling us to serve in Africa," Nathan said.

The couple is being sent to Sub-Saharan Africa by Lancing First Church in Lansing, Kn.

Pleasant View Church in Waynesburg, Ky., is sending Jonathan and Rebecca McNeil to serve in Poland, where Jonathan grew up.

"Growing up as a missionary kid in Poland, God opened my eyes to the lostness of the world and the saving power of the Gospel through a personal relationship with Jesus," he said. "In 2013, God opened the door for me to return to Poland as a single IMB missionary."

Rebecca recalled, "Personal Bible study and biblically faithful preaching opened my eyes to God's plans for the nations to worship Him through His Son. As I prayed for God to



HEADING OUT — Vance Pitman, senior pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, encourages 42 new International Mission Board missionaries to be world changers as they head to mission fields, in his message at the Nov. 14 appointment service near Richmond, Va. (IMB photo)

send workers to the harvest, He made it clear to me by sending me to serve [a two-year assignment] in Poland."

Describing what it must have been like for the disciples as they watched Christ ascend into heaven and leave them with the task of global evangelism, Pitman encouraged the new missionaries to embrace the "desperation that produces prayer."

"The disciples returned to Jerusalem and devoted themselves to prayer, and they didn't stop praying until God showed up to tell them how they were going to do what God told them to do."

That singular focus prepared those early disciples for

the outpouring of God's Spirit that came at Pentecost, Pitman said, cautioning, "Prayer is not powerful. The One to whom we pray is powerful."

"The most important thing you carry to [your place of service] is not your training. The most important thing you carry with you is your intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus."

The next IMB Sending Celebration is scheduled for Feb. 6 in Richmond.

Editor's note: For more information about IMB, whose missionaries are supported through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, visit imb.org.

The Life of Christ

Live Drive Thru Scenes from the Life of Jesus

Dec. 8th & 9th • 6-8 pm
FREE ADMISSION

Presented by:
Good Hope Baptist Church

4 miles N of Richton on
Good Hope Church Rd.

FOR MORE

INFO

CALL

601-641-0337

Southern Baptist Convention Estimates

Estimates Compared to 2017 Annual Church Profile Totals

Item/Statistic	Estimated totals for all SBC congregations	Reported 2017 Totals	Numeric Difference
Total Members	15,747,333	15,005,638	741,695
Weekly Worship Average Attendance	6,568,222	5,320,488	1,247,734
Total Baptisms	363,069	254,122	108,947
Total Receipts	\$14,380,027,882	\$11,728,420,088 ¹	\$2,651,607,794

METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATED TOTALS

One set of estimates was applied to congregations that had previously reported but did not report in 2017. For most statistics, the previously reported value was adjusted down based on patterns seen in other congregations that resumed reporting that item. A similar method was used when a third-party source of data could estimate the church's attendance, extrapolating other statistics based on averages for congregations of that size. A third method was used for congregations that have never reported by examining median data for congregations that reported for the first time in 2017.

As with all extrapolations, assumptions are being made for estimation and the validity of these assumptions cannot be completely confirmed. However, every effort was made to obtain additional information and to use reasonable assumptions grounded in the available data.

NOTE

1. Baptist Convention of New York and California Southern Baptist Convention did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the item.

LifeWay Research

ACP report shows continuing baptism, membership declines

NASHVILLE (BP) — Long-standing patterns continued to dominate the 2017 Annual Church Profile (ACP) report released in June. The number of congregations cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) increased over 2016 totals, while reported membership and baptisms continued their year-over-year declines.

That's not the whole story, noted Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, which compiles the ACP data in cooperation with Baptist state conventions. LifeWay Research is the evangelical research arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC in Nashville that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

The 2017 ACP totals released in June counted all 51,920 congregations affiliated with the SBC — an increase of more than 150 over 2016. However, the ACP totals did not include statistics for every Southern Baptist congregation.

Despite the best efforts of associations and state conventions across the country to gather data, 29% of congregations (churches and missions) did not participate, McConnell said. Seven in 10 Southern Baptist congregations. Seventy-one percent participated in the ACP survey by reporting at least one item on the profile, down from 74% the previous three years.

For that reason, reported totals do not include all of the activity of the SBC, though the summary does include some adjustments for non-reporting congregations.

LifeWay Research conducted additional analysis this fall on reporting patterns and created esti-

mates for non-reporting congregations. Based on the analysis, the estimated total membership of all Southern Baptist congregations is 15.7 million, compared to 15 million reported membership.

LifeWay Research's analysis also estimated 363,069 baptisms likely occurred, compared to 254,122 reported baptisms.

McConnell said the gap between reported totals and estimated statistics for all Southern Baptist congregations is nearly 109,000 baptisms, 1.2 million attendees, more than 741,000 members, and nearly \$2.7 billion in total receipts.

"The additional analysis this year is not an attempt to create bigger numbers," McConnell said. "Analysis of this type cannot replace actual information reported from congregations. Rather, it's an acknowledgement that the traditional reporting is not telling the whole story of the changes taking place in the SBC, even though the traditional reporting at the national level already pulls forward attendance and receipt statistics for a few years."

Pulled forward statistics are specific responses congregations provided in prior years that are included in a current year's data when a statistic is missing for that congregation.

McConnell acknowledged even the estimated statistics show a clear decline in membership levels. "Is the SBC still in decline? In short, yes. The SBC experienced growth in membership until a peak in 2006 followed by decline. Even prior to 2006, researchers noted the rate of membership growth was declining at a steady pace."

McConnell pointed out the recent decline in baptisms across

the SBC is in part due to a lack of reporting. He confirmed that the ACP report does not pull data forward for baptisms.

"With some trepidation we have used statistics to estimate that there were likely about 363,069 baptisms in 2017," McConnell said. This estimate is 43% higher than the 2017 reported total.

However, McConnell said, the higher baptism estimate still indicates a form of decline in baptisms. "In 1950, congregations baptized more than the 2017 estimate with only seven million members [in 1950]. The ratio of members to baptisms continues to increase, which means it takes more members per baptism."

Information collected on the ACP tells several important ministry stories. It tells a congregation's story and allows the church to keep a history of leadership and statistics. "This history is helpful when churches look at their own trend lines, introduce a prospective new pastor to their church, and when they seek outside financing," McConnell said.

The ACP also tells the story of local associations, state conventions, and the SBC as a whole.

"The ACP gives a quick summary of who we are as Southern Baptists. The ACP statistics survey and leadership profile answers, who and how many individuals, congregations and associations are connected through our convention," McConnell said.

"The goal of the ACP is to accurately describe the relationships and changes in relationships across the SBC."

Editor's note: This report was released by LifeWay Christian Resources.

Prof fights for free speech, religious liberty in classroom

PORTSMOUTH, Ohio (BP and local reports) — A Shawnee State University philosophy professor filed a lawsuit against the Portsmouth, Ohio, school on Nov. 5 for disciplining him because he insists on using the courtesy title that corresponds to a student's biological sex.

Nicholas Meriwether, a 22-year tenured faculty member at the 3,800-student public university, uses courtesy titles like "Mr." and "Miss" with students' last names in his classes, but his belief that God created humans immutably male or female puts that practice at odds with the university's nondiscrimination policy which demands employees affirm a person's preferred gender.

The case could force publicly-funded schools to reassess their LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) non-discrimination policies, said Meriwether's attorney, Travis Barham with Alliance Defending Freedom in Scottsdale, Az.

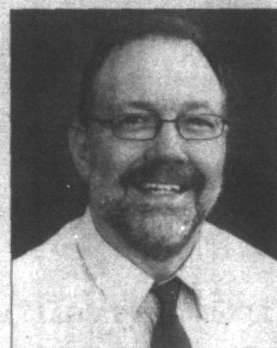
"Public universities have no business compelling people to express views they do not hold," Barham said. "That's the message of this case."

A disciplinary letter placed in Meriwether's personnel file in June claimed he created a "hostile environment" in his political philosophy class by refusing to address a biologically-male transgender student, Alena Bruening, as female.

Meriwether suggested to the student and school administrators that he refer to Bruening by first or last name only, with no gender-specific prefix. According to the lawsuit, Bruening took offense at the offer and responded with an obscenity. Bruening filed two discrimination complaints and threatened to have the professor fired.

Meriwether claims in a federal lawsuit that administrators violated his free speech, his religious liberty, and his employment contract by demanding he submit to the university's identity politics. The lawsuit claims Shawnee State showed animus toward Meriwether's religious beliefs as early as 2016.

When the university was drafting the LGBT nondiscrimination policy, Meriwether warned administrators it would conflict with employees' speech rights and religious liberty. A department chairwoman allegedly told him that religion "oppresses students," and an administrator said forcing faculty to use speech they find objectionable "had no bearing" on a professor's "academic



Nicholas Meriwether

freedom or free speech rights," according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit also states that during a meeting about the discrimination complaint this spring, a Shawnee State administrator openly laughed when a union representative described Meriwether's religious beliefs.

"A philosophy classroom is where you are supposed to be able to debate all issues but particularly the issues of 'What is the essence of human nature?'" Barham said. "Not being able to discuss that or forcing professors to endorse ideological viewpoints on those issues that they don't hold, that's a threat to free speech and to academic freedom."

Nancy Pearcey, an apologetics professor at Houston Baptist University in Houston, Texas, agreed Shawnee State was threatening Meriwether's free speech.

"It's not just a matter of courtesy when the state mandates it," said Pearcey, who is also director of Houston Baptist's Center for Christian Worldview. "Essentially the state is saying, 'You must use certain words.'"

With Meriwether's lawsuit, Pearcey believes American teachers have someone championing their rights. "I think this case is really heartening because what it shows is a few people are fighting back," she said.

Barham said recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions favor Meriwether's cause. In one case involving California pro-life pregnancy centers in *NIFLA v. Becerra* in June, the nation's high court reaffirmed the constitutional prohibition against compelled speech.

Article courtesy of WORLD Digital, a division of WORLD Magazine (www.wmg.org) based in Asheville, NC. Used by permission. Edited for style and clarity.

BIBLIOCIPHER

TOJ OFYSO OAZ GJLRO, NSL
PLRTAATAR OAZ NSL LAZTAR, HOTNS
NSL FGEZ, CSTQS TH, OAZ CSTQS
COH, OAZ CSTQS TH NG QGJL, NSL
OFJTRSNB.

ELDLFONTGA GAL: LTRSN

Clue: R = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalms 51:1

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004. © 2005

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

TAXATION

cont. from p. 1

The provision—Section 512(a)(7)—requires houses of worship and non-profits to pay a 21% tax on such employee benefits as parking and transportation. The measure not only imposes a new tax hardship on churches and nonprofits but imposes on them "burdensome accounting and

regulatory compliance costs," according to the ERLC-led letter.

The ERLC and its allies say the provision "will hopelessly entangle the [Internal Revenue Service] with houses of worship, simply because these houses of worship allow their clergy to park in their parking lots."

ERLC President Russell Moore said in a news release, "Churches ought not be seen by the government as untapped sources of tax

revenue. While the effect of this section of the tax code may very well have been unintended, it must be remedied.

"As the American founders clearly understood, the power to tax is the power to destroy. The proper separation of the state from the church is at the heart of our American project. This section of the tax code, however, blurs those lines in harmful ways."

WILDFIRES

cont. from p. 1

Paradise, where about 27,000 people live.

On the day the blaze overwhelmed Paradise, Sorensen and his wife Linda got the call that their granddaughter's school was being evacuated. The typically 15-minute drive turned into an hour and a half. It required five hours of driving amid fire and smoke to make it down the ridge and into safety.

"It was wall-to-wall traffic trying to get out," Sorensen said. "There were flames and smoke. It never turned daylight that day."

With 59 reported deaths and counting, the Camp Fire has officially become the most lethal in California's history. More than 9,000 residential and commercial structures have been destroyed.

"The fire came on so fast, and it was just mass confusion," said Mike Bivins, the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDRL) director for California Baptists. The roads into and out of the towns of Paradise and Magalia are limited.

"The fire seems to have trapped more people than was originally figured," he said.

Bivins has heard horror stories like Sorensen's from survivors in shelters who had to run and drive for their lives to escape the fire.

First responders continue

"It will be years before it's a town again, but all through that, our church will be standing and our church will be ministering."

Doug Crowder

pastor of Magalia Pines Church

search and rescue efforts, using cadaver dogs to help find victims. Emergency utility crews are traveling into the area to ensure that electricity, propane, and natural gas supplies in the area will not create hazards for residents when they are allowed to return.

Once the first responders complete their jobs, Bivins and SBDRL will begin cooperating with churches in the region to assess how best to support pastors, congregations, and communities. Many surviving victims have lost loved ones and virtually all their earthly possessions.

"We are working with the local pastors to assess the needs and discern the best way to reach the community," Bivins said. "We don't know what the needs are right now other than prayer, gift cards, and other financial support."

Bivins mentioned that non-perishable items such as clothes and blankets are not needed at this time.

For now, SBDRL chaplains are serving with the American Red Cross to provide spiritual care for those in shelters. A laundry and shower unit has been set up at First Church, Gridley for survivors in the area.

In Paradise and Magalia, three Southern Baptist churches miraculously survived the blaze—Paradise Ridge; First Church, Paradise; and Magalia Pines Church, Magalia—while structures all around the churches were consumed.

Charles Woods, the associational missions strategist for the local Sierra Butte Association in Gridley, stays in touch with those pastors every day. "I would ask for all of us... for prayer about how to minister to everyone best. Pray for the knowledge and wisdom to know what to say and what to do in the way that they best need it. That's my heart's desire right now."

Paradise residents are wondering what the next steps will be for their community, but when people ask pastor Sorensen if he plans to stay, he says that decision is not his to make. "As long as God keeps me there, I'm going to stay because I know there are people who are going to need help."

"It will be years before it's a town again," said Doug Crowder, pastor of Magalia Pines Church, "but all through that, our church will be standing and our church will be ministering."

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Sean A. Milner, Executive Director
P.O. Box 27
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242
www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

NOVEMBER 1-15

HONORS

Dr. & Mrs. Frank (Nancy) Harmon
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy W. Welch
Mr. Charles Rendrow
Mrs. Edna M. Gilliland

NOVEMBER 1-15

MEMORIALS

Mr. Porter Adkins
Ralph, Mildred & Nancy Gardner
Mr. Ronald Albritton
Stanton BC
Mr. Jim Alexander
Senior Ladies SSC, Arlington BC
Mr. Chris Balof
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion
Mrs. Lois Blaine
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mrs. Wilma Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. R. N. Humphreys
Ms. Christy Miller Brush
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mrs. Jahazel Buckley
Mr. Ted Buckley
Mr. George Roy Burnett

Mr. B. K. Smith, Jr.
Mrs. Charlotte Campbell
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mr. Philip Casco
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan
Mrs. Francis Boyle Cooper
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Nipper
Mrs. Judy Nail Eakin
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mr. Ricky Ferguson
Mr. & Mrs. Hembree Brandon
Mrs. Carolyn Floyd
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mrs. Margaret Garrett
Mrs. Peggy McLean
Ms. Lula Bell Godner
Mr. & Mrs. Louis J. Dugas
Mr. Jack Gray
Mr. & Mrs. Herman L. Dungan
Mrs. Nelda Hardage
Mrs. June D. Shepard
Ms. Jean D. Evans
Mr. Wayne Helms
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mr. Troy Hocutt
Mr. & Mrs. Glen E. King
Mr. Rudy A. Holcomb
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mr. James F. Jenkins
Mrs. Mary H. Jenkins and Children
Ms. Wanda Joiner
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins

Mr. Dudley Keene
Mr. Marcus D. Keene
Mr. & Mrs. James (Wilma) Kidd
Mr. & Mrs. Lee A. Kidd
Mr. Sandy Kincaide
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan
Mrs. Edwina Kish
Ms. Betty Sanders
Mrs. Betty Kittrell
Mrs. Joy B. Roberts
Mrs. Laverne Lawrence
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Goff
Mrs. Virginia Lee
Mr. & Mrs. Floyd L. Smith
Mrs. Doris Lipe
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan
Mrs. Penny Washington
Mrs. Tricy Lum
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan
Mrs. Jane Luncford
Mr. J. R. Luncford
Mrs. Lady Dell Mechatto Martin
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O. Crosthwait, Jr.
Mrs. Vivian M. Mathews
Mrs. Edna M. Gilliland
Drew McClendon
FBC Rolling Fork/Church & Community
Mr. Walter McCool
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Nipper
Ms. Linda Arrington Mitchum
Mr. B. K. Smith, Jr.

Mrs. Billie Jean Green Moore
Mr. & Mrs. Hembree Brandon
Mr. Paul Morris
Mrs. Edwina M. Wise
Mr. Louis Mulvihill
Eddiceton BC
Mrs. Ruth S. Oliver Owens
Betty & Ronnie Crosby
Lucy Keene SSC, New Prospect BC
Mr. & Mrs. J.V. (Mary K) Parker
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Parker
Mr. Billy Pullen
Ruth & Cheer SSC, Juniper Grove BC
Mr. Robert "Bobby" Redwood
Mr. & Mrs. R. N. Humphreys
Mr. Harlan Reynolds
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mr. Henry Russell
Mr. & Mrs. Jackie Wooley
Ms. Carolyn Simpson
Larry & Jo Beth Burkheimer
Mrs. Janie Slay
Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Bradford
Joyce Stewart
Community Thrift Shop
Mrs. Judy Hutson Sturdivant
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Moss
Mr. Jeff Read Tarver
Lake Tindall, LLP
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan
Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Tindall

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH WATER VALLEY hosted the first Commissioning Service for The Baptist Children's Village Houseparents. Ken Rhodes with the MCB Mission Network worked with BCV staff to have BCV Houseparents designated as Missionary Baptist Missionaries. FBC Pastor Dr. Randy Bain issued the Commissioning Message and Dr. Jim Futral led the Commissioning prayer for the Houseparents. Associational Missions Director for Yalobusha Association Craig Baker opened the service with prayer. Additional Houseparent Commissioning Services are scheduled at the following BCV Campus host churches. We would be honored to have you come to any of the following services to celebrate with us God's call to our BCV Houseparents:

STAR BAPTIST CHURCH | Sunday, December 2 at 6:00 p.m., India Nunnery Campus Houseparents
FBC WAYNESBORO | Wednesday, December 12 at 5:30 p.m., Powell-Walley Campus Houseparents
FBC WIGGINS | Sunday, January 13 at 6:00 p.m., Deanash Campus Houseparents
FAIR RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH | Sunday, January 27 at 6:00 p.m., Dickerson Place Campus Houseparents

BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Tom Prather at tprather@bcvms.com or 601-952-2422. A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.



Houseparents Pictured left to right are April and David Whiteside, Felecia Allen, Peggy and Bill Tate, Lynn and Shelby Mathis.



Standing left to right are program speakers BCV Executive Director Sean Milner, BCV Director of Human Resources Tom Prather, MCB Executive Secretary Jim Futral, FBC Water Valley Pastor Randy Bain, Yalobusha Association AMD Craig Baker.



Left to Right BCV Alumni Dale Jackson, Bobby Thames who gave a brief testimony about the power of Houseparent influence in their lives.

With Anticipation • James 5:1-20

In this final lesson from James, we will learn that believers should turn to God when facing the trials of life. We will do so with patience and prayer, while protecting those who have faltered.

Patience (James 5:7-9)

James reminded his readers to focus on the return of Christ as they faced trials, knowing that Christ will return at the perfect time. Remember, James was writing to "the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad..." (James 1:1). His audience was the Jewish Diaspora, including Jewish Christians who had been scattered from their homeland because of persecution. They were facing great trials and needed James' encouragement. He reminded them that, in the midst of their trials, they could trust in Christ's return.

Wouldn't you agree that we also face trials? As a post-Christian nation, decisions are being made that defy the Word of God. We are expected to embrace those decisions without question or dispute. If we dare to disagree, we are labeled as fanatical and intolerant.

Our Judeo-Christian beliefs are being pushed aside for those of Islam and other religions. Recently, I was shopping at Pier One. I was surprised to see statues representing Buddhism and Hinduism. However, I was most

disturbed when I could not find one manger scene, or angel, or cross. Also, Christianity continues to be removed from the schools. No Bible stories. No Thanksgiving prayer. Even the story of Christ's birth is being replaced with winter festivals and "Happy Holidays."

Folks, I believe that these examples are just the beginning of the persecution of Christians to come in America.

Just within the last two years, we have seen the rhetoric against Christianity become bolder and more hateful. But there is

good news. In spite of persecution, we, too, can live expectantly in anticipation of the return of Christ.

Prayer (James 5:13-18)

James directed his readers to be people of prayer, especially when facing suffering and sickness. He wrote, "Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with

oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him" (vv. 13-15). Do we really believe in the power of prayer? As Christians, we have all the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. We should not wait until all hope is lost to pray. Instead, we should call on the Lord from the start.

James reminded his readers of the prayers Elijah offered as an example of the power of prayer. "Elijah was a man with a nature

like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit" (vv. 17-18). Elijah was a normal guy who was used mightily by God. Like Elijah, believers should take all matters to God in prayer, trusting Him to provide an answer.

Protecting (James 5:19-20)

James called for his readers to seek to reclaim people who had strayed

from the faith or faltered under the pressure of difficulties. Straying from the truth leads to sin. Christians involved in sin are in serious trouble and need to repent. Sometimes they need help. James affirmed the person who took on the reclaiming ministry, characterizing such actions in terms of saving a life.

Believers have a great opportunity. We can offer grace to faltering believers, encouraging them to get back on track and helping them rejuvenate their faith in Jesus. We can help them learn to face their trials by reminding them of Christ's impending return.

The book of James teaches us about faith in action. We have learned six important lessons. Believers can endure trials knowing God is at work in all things. Believers respond to Jesus' work in their lives with obedience and compassion. True faith produces visible change. Believers demonstrate godly maturity by controlling their speech. Believers are to be committed to live out God's will. Believers should turn to God when facing the trials of life. So, brothers and sisters, let's live by faith with perseverance, obedience, works, self-control, submission, and anticipation.

McGraw is a NAMB-endorsed chaplain at Louisiana State Penitentiary and member of Woodville Church, Woodville.

**Explore the Bible**

with Liz McGraw

A Prayer of Thanksgiving • Psalm 138:1-8

Last week we observed Thanksgiving, when people contemplate their lives and give thanks for their blessings. Even non-believers observe this day, though for many it simply marks the beginning of the shopping season for Christmas. This is the time for measuring our blessings and giving thanks to God.

So little in life is up to us. We choose neither when or where we are born. We do not get to select our parents or our heritage. Our gender, race, hair color (that can be altered), height, body type, innate intelligence, and health come from outside of us. We can change our body type by overeating or undereating. We can affect our health by smoking or exercising, but what we start life with has nothing to do with us. It is all from God. Life is a gift from God. Our scientist study life but cannot create life. I learned in the second grade a Joyce Kilmer poem: "Only God Can Make a Tree."

Our lives come not from evolving slime but from our Eternal Savior. Isaiah 57:15 reads, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the hum-

ble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," (KJV). The magnificent Creator wishes to reside in each of our hearts as He dwells in the high and holy places. Thank you, Jesus.

Let us all express our gratitude and trust in the One who hears our prayers.

Our belief in the power of praying to God and our trust in Him is reflected in our thanks. As God responds to our needs, we certainly thank Him; but even before we see the answer, we can thank Him, for we know the loving character of Jesus

to whom we pray. We can pray with an attitude of thankfulness, knowing God will answer in the best way. If you only pray when faced with major obstacles, you are not serving God, but expecting Him to serve you.

Famous gospel songwriter, the late Dottie Rambo wrote a song many decades ago: "I Just Came to Talk with You, Lord." Do you spend time with the Lord without a want-list? May

our prayers contain more thanks and praises than requests. Many of the Psalms of David were about his pressing needs, while others were pure praise. Psalm 138:1-2 reads, "I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name," (KJV).

We studied the Model Prayer in detail, so now it is time to put it into practice. Being informed about prayer and praying are not the same. In the Luke account of the Model Prayer, the disciples of Jesus asked Him to teach them to pray. They asked Him as He was engaged in prayer. So now we know how to pray, so let us pray. David wrote in Psalm 138:8, "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth forever: forsake not

the works of thine own hands," (KJV).

1 Thessalonians 5:17 reads simply, "Pray without ceasing," (KJV). In the original Greek, the two words in this verse are also translated, "constantly pray." The verb to pray is an imperative and is the voice which means it is up to us to do this. Some believe that God is not active in our world today. Their theology describes a God who has ceased to work in the world today. Others express that belief by not asking God to intervene, as though our prayers have no effect. A scene revealed of heaven some time in our future shows that our prayers have impact. Revelation 8:3 reads, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne," (KJV). So, all the collective prayers of the saints will be brought before the Lord, though many were prayed millennia ago. The first "pray" in the Lord's Prayer is an imperative. Jesus said to pray. Let us honor Him with our requests, thanks, praise, and adoration.

Henson is a member of Meadow Grove Church, Brandon.

Bible Studies for Life

with Rick Henson



CBF churches no longer welcome in Ky. convention

PIKEVILLE, Ky. (BP and local reports) — The Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) will cut ties with a small group of churches that remain dually aligned with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), which broke away from conservatives in Southern Baptist Convention 27 years ago and took steps earlier this year to allow the hiring of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) staff members.

Messengers to the KBC annual meeting voted Nov. 13 to accept a recommendation from the convention's Credentials Committee, the Administrative Committee, and the Mission Board to terminate affiliation with congregations that choose to remain a part of CBF, which was founded in 1991 as a fellowship of churches that objected to the ideology and methods of the Southern Baptist Convention's Conservative Resurgence.

The CBF has been described as antagonistic at times to the Conservative Resurgence.

Dually aligned churches will be given up to a year to comply before they're removed from the KBC's list of affiliated congregations.

The matter was debated for about 20 minutes before the motion passed overwhelmingly.

KBC executive director Paul Chitwood, who was elected Nov. 15 to serve as the new president of Southern Baptists' International Mission Board in Richmond, Va., said the move by the Kentucky messengers should be seen as "a call to those congregations to safeguard biblical teaching and maintain their historic relationships, understanding that the Bible speaks clearly on

the issue of homosexuality and that they would not want to support groups that embrace unscriptural lifestyles."

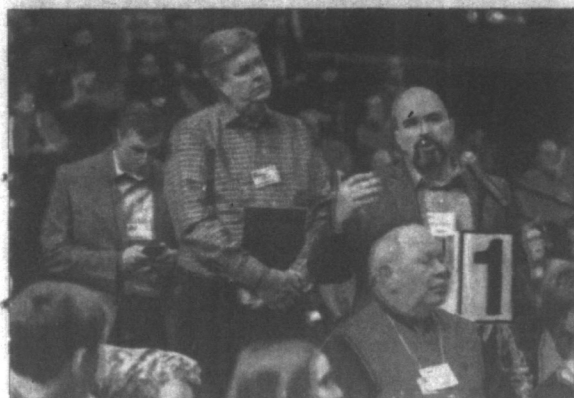
Bob Fox, executive coordinator of CBF Kentucky (CBFKY) in Louisville, issued a statement in response to the KBC's decision: "It is with great sadness that we learned that the Kentucky Baptist Convention has chosen to end its relationship with churches who have been in dual alignment with CBF and CBFKY," Fox said.

"The Baptist witness in our state and in the world is weaker because of this decision by the KBC today related to our collaboration for the sake of Christ," he noted. "Whenever the relationship between parts of the body of Christ are broken it is a tragedy."

Last year, KBC messengers had essentially put dually aligned churches on notice when they directed the Committee on Credentials to monitor the situation and return with a recommendation at this year's annual meeting in Pikeville.

Members of the KBC Committee on Credentials have reached out to dually aligned congregations to ask if they were aware of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's new hiring policy and to ask if they intended to remain affiliated with the group. Some churches have broken ranks with CBF Kentucky while others have not.

The Western Recorder, newsjournal of the KBC, reported the state convention's move affects about 25 KBC-affiliated churches that have given financial support to KBC in the past two years and are currently supporting the CBF financially.



CBF CHURCHES OUT — Matt Shamblin, pastor of Rose Hill Church in Ashland, Ky., speaks to messengers at the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in support of cutting ties with churches that remain dually aligned with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). (BP photo courtesy of KBC)



Chapmans, Gettys, Platt

Evangelicals for Life widens scope for 2019's conference

WASHINGTON (BP) — Southern Baptist-sponsored Evangelicals for Life (EFL) 2019 has expanded its schedule and added two leading couples from the modern Christian music world and a well-known preacher/author to the program.

Steven Curtis and Mary Beth Chapman, Keith and Kristyn Getty, and David Platt will appear at the fourth annual EFL conference, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville announced Nov. 8 in an e-mail to registrants.

The Commission, host of EFL, also disclosed the conference will begin a day earlier, Jan. 16, than previously scheduled.

The Chapmans will open the conference with a benefit concert the evening of Jan. 16 at McLean Bible Church in Vienna, Va., a suburb of Washington, D.C. The church is the site of the conference.

Steven Curtis Chapman has won 58 Dove Awards, the most of any artist in Christian music.

The concert will seek to raise funds for the Psalm 139 Project, ERLC's ministry to help place ultrasound machines in pregnancy resource centers across the country.

Platt, who left the presidency of Southern Baptists' International Mission Board in Richmond, Va., to serve as McLean's pastor-teacher, will address the conference during the Jan. 16 session.

The Gettys, leaders in the modern hymn movement, will speak Jan. 17 on their song titled, Psalm 139, and the referendum approved earlier this year to overturn Ireland's constitutional ban on abortion.

The Gettys, natives of Northern Ireland, have written or co-written some of Christianity's most popular modern hymns, including *In Christ Alone*.

The Chapmans, adoptive parents of three daughters from China and longtime adoption advocates, will speak Jan. 17 as well. In 2003, the parents of six co-founded Show Hope, which has helped in the adoption of more than 6,000 children from about 60 countries through its grants.

ERLC president Russell Moore said he "could not be more thrilled to partner with these heroes of mine throughout Evangelicals for Life."

"There are few people in the world more committed to the lives of vulnerable children, born and unborn," he told Baptist Press in a written statement. "I'm pleased to be able to add this evening benefit concert too and look forward to a spiritually memorable event from everyone there."

"Throughout the entire event, my prayer is that God would use it to see countless children brought safely into the world and loved by families and churches as they are already loved by God."

The expanded conference schedule will now include a morning session Jan. 17. Originally, EFL was slated to begin with an afternoon session that day. The conference will have morning, afternoon, and evening sessions Jan. 17 and will conclude with a morning session Jan. 18.

EFL participants will be able to attend the annual March for Life and rally, which will begin at noon Jan. 18 on the National Mall in Washington. The conference and march will coincide with the 46th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion throughout the country.

Previously announced speakers in addition to Moore include: ■ J.D. Greear, Southern Baptist Convention president and

pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

■ Dharti Lewis, vice president of the North American Mission Board's Send Network, the entity's church planting ministry arm, and lead pastor of Blueprint Church in Atlanta.

■ Kristen Waggoner, senior vice president of the United States legal division of Alliance Defending Freedom in Scottsdale, Az.

■ Karen Ellis, president and co-founder of the Makazi Institute and a specialist in international religious freedom and human rights.

■ Noe Garcia, senior pastor of North Phoenix (Az.) Church.

Speakers and panelists will address protecting unborn children and caring for their mothers. They also will discuss other human dignity issues such as foster care, service to the disabled, and ministry to refugees.

The ERLC and Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, Co., launched EFL in 2016 as an effort to help increase awareness among evangelical Christians of the March for Life and motivate them to participate in it.

Evangelicals have been heavily involved in the pro-life movement for decades but have not made participation in the march a priority. Focus partnered with the ERLC to host the event in its first three years.

Roman Catholics have dominated attendance at the March for Life since it began in 1974, a year after the Jan. 22 *Roe* decision. The march brings together tens of thousands of pro-lifers to rally on the National Mall before walking to Capitol Hill.

Information on and registration for EFL are available at www.evangelicals.life.